

THE DRAMATIC MAGAZINE.

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ILLUSTRATED MEMOIRS OF OUR EARLY ACTORS AND ACTRESSES.

(Continued from p. 356. Vol. II.)

No. XII.

THOMAS BETTERTON.

"SUCH an actor as Mr. Betterton," says Steele,* "ought to be recorded with the same respect as Roscius among the Romans;" and, with a perfect conviction of the justice of this remark, we shall endeavour to compose a history of his life, somewhat more satisfactory than the brief and blundering narratives which have hitherto been printed as such. If we exceed the limits usually designed to these articles, the more than usual importance of the subject must plead our excuse; and should we fail to trace him through every part of his career, as distinctly as might be wished, let us be allowed to observe, that at a much earlier period this was found to be impracticable; and that eighty years ago, the compiler of a similar article in Cibber's *Lives of the Poets* was compelled to commence it with the admission, that "almost every circumstance connected with the life of this celebrated actor is exposed to dispute," and that "even the manner of his first coming on the stage is a subject of controversy."

By succeeding generations, the reputation of those who have strutted their hour upon the stage, with the character of being great performers, must inevitably be taken on trust. Poets and dramatists, sculptors and painters, leave their works behind them, which may at any time be referred to, as tests of their skill; but the actor's creations pass with him to the tomb, and for future fame he is dependent on the reports of his contemporaries. It is only by attentively considering these, that any accurate idea of his talents can be formed; and, unluckily, the carelessness or inability of writers upon the stage, has frequently caused their panegyrics to be couched in such general terms, as to render them wholly without value in a critical point of view. To Betterton, fortunately, this remark does not apply; for although many chroniclers of his doings deal only in the vague applause we complain of, there are others, who by their minute delineations of his style, and their discriminating dissertations on its beauties, impress us with the conviction, that he richly merited all the plaudits he received; and that, if to Garrick must be assigned the foremost

* Tatler, No. CLXVII.

place among the actors of England, to Betterton must of necessity be awarded the second.

We must, however, admit, that many fortuitous circumstances combined with his merit to procure for him the distinction he arrived at, to a few of which it may be proper to advert. He commenced his career at a juncture when the public mind, just bursting from the trammels imposed upon it by puritanical bigotry, returned with eagerness to those diversions which abstinence had rendered doubly delightful, and to none with more avidity, than to the entertainments of the theatre. After the year 1647, when the revolutionary parliament succeeded in completely suppressing the stage, a long night of sorrow and persecution was encountered by its professors; and though some of them managed occasionally to earn a miserable pittance by exercising their prohibited vocation "in holes and corners," and thus dragged on a wretched existence till the day-star of the drama again rose to view, the major part either fell in the wars, or died of poverty and old age; so that of the principal actors who had seen the extinction of the theatre, few survived to witness its revival. A description of the shifts and contrivances by which the miserable outcasts sometimes found means to evade the vigilance of their bigoted persecutors during this dreary interregnum, would form a chapter of curious though melancholy interest in the history of the stage. The subject has hitherto been scarcely touched upon, but we purpose, at no very distant day, to treat of it more at large.

It was not to be expected that the metropolis of a great nation, far advanced in civilization and refinement, would continue patiently to endure the yoke of a gloomy bigotry, which employed its withering influence to debar mankind from indulging in any of the rational amusements necessary to social existence. Accordingly, for some time before the utter subversion of republicanism, the theatre by degrees began again to rear its head; and dramatic performances, if not actually countenanced, were connived at by the government of Cromwell, who was far too shrewd a man to share in all the prejudices of his adherents, although compelled, through policy, in some degree to humour them. Availing himself of this forbearance, Sir W. Davenant, about the year 1656, exhibited dramas in Rutland House, at the north-east corner of Charter-house-square, and afterwards at the Cock-pit Theatre in Drury-lane; though without any positive authority from the ruling powers, and probably with occasional interruptions; but in 1659, when the speedy restoration of monarchy became almost certain, a regular license to act plays was granted to one Rhodes, formerly wardrobe-keeper at the old Blackfriars Theatre; who, either collecting a new company, or assuming the management of Davenant's, carried on performances at the Cock-pit without let or molestation.

This short introduction will serve to make the reader acquainted with the state of the theatre, and of men's minds respecting it, when Betterton first appeared upon the stage. Never perhaps, before or since, were its amusements enjoyed with so much zest; for, to the relish imparted by novelty, were added the fascinations of beautiful women, in the place of "lubberly boys," who had previously sustained the female parts; the paltry tapestry hangings, hitherto the sole deco-

rations of the theatres, were succeeded by scenery of the richest description; singing, music, and dancing added their seductive charms; the king and nobles, by their frequent attendance, imparted an air of style and splendour to the amusement; a galaxy of wits and men of genius, whose names partake of immortality, vied with one another in writing for the stage; while, to crown the whole, such a host of talented performers arose to represent their productions, as probably no succeeding age has witnessed. These causes combined, excited such a vivid public interest in stage amusements, as we, in the present evil days of indifference to such matters, can with difficulty credit, and can never expect to see renewed.—Now to our hero.

He was a native of London, son of Matthew Betterton, an under-cook in the household of King Charles the First, and is supposed to have been born in August, 1635, as he was baptized on the 11th of that month, at the church of St. Margaret's parish, Westminster. Of his boyhood, nothing is related beyond the fact, that he discovered a great inclination for reading, which induced his parents to think of educating him for one of the liberal professions; but this design being rendered abortive "by the violence and confusion of the times," he was at his own request bound apprentice to a bookseller. This relation, however, sprung entirely, we believe, from that silly feeling, which, since the very birth of the stage, has induced the biographers of actors to aim at exalting their heroes, by concealing the meanness of their origin, or misrepresenting their original destination. Thus, if we look into the lives of the present race of performers, we find it related of one, that he was placed at his outset in the world "with an artist of considerable eminence," which being translated, means a dauber of tavern-signs; of another, that before he went upon the stage, he was engaged in "a decorative branch of the fine arts,"—in plain English, he was a tray-painter at Birmingham. A certain frail actress, whose father was a corporal in the militia, is invariably described as "the daughter of an officer in His Majesty's service;" and a mouthing tragedian at Drury, whose history tells that he was "originally engaged in mercantile pursuits in the west of England," would bristle up furiously, if reminded that he was merely a brush-maker at Bath. Such are the contemptible equivocations resorted to for the purpose of concealing what nothing but the most childish weakness would be ashamed of; and a similar feeling, we suspect, must have influenced Betterton's biographers, when they deemed it necessary to apologise for the very natural circumstance, that the son of a pains-taking scullion originally occupied no higher station in life, than that of apprentice to a bookseller.

In Cibber's *Lives of the Poets*, it is asserted that Betterton's master was "one Mr. Holden, a man of some eminence, and happy in the friendship of Sir W. Davenant;" but the more generally received account declares him to have been the Rhodes already mentioned, who, before the suppression of theatres, joined the occupation of wardrobe-keeper to that of bookseller. Cibber adds that Betterton being frequently sent on matters of business to Davenant, conceived therefrom the first notion of going upon the stage; and that Sir William, perceiving in him indications of a genius for the profession, encouraged his inclination, and readily accepted him as a performer.

It seems probable that this was about the year 1656, and that Betterton's first essay as an actor took place at Rutland House, because we find him described by Downes, in 1659, as sustaining characters of the highest eminence, which it is not to be supposed would have been intrusted to a mere novice. Malone indeed remarks that "he could not have appeared on the stage in 1656, no theatre being then allowed." But this inference is drawn from erroneous premises; for although no theatre was actually "*allowed*," it is certain that performances took place surreptitiously, or by connivance, as at the commencement of this article we have endeavoured to explain.

The company formed by Rhodes, of which Betterton was a member, appear to have continued their operations either at the Cock-pit, or at an old theatre in Salisbury-court, Fleet-street, (built *circa* 1620) until the year 1662; but shortly after the restoration, Davenant, having obtained a patent from the king, once more assumed the management, and styled them the Duke's servants; while their rivals, who acted under the authority of another patent, were called the King's. Of the latter, the present Drury-lane, and of the former, the present Covent-garden company, are considered the successors; the Drury-lane actors still exclusively assuming in their bills, the designation of "His Majesty's Servants."

Of the Duke's company, which removed in 1662 to a new house in Portugal-street, Lincoln's-inn-fields, Betterton was for a long series of years the chief boast and ornament. To enumerate all the parts he is reported to have excelled in, would occupy, very unprofitably, a considerable space, and we shall therefore merely refer our readers to the chronicle of old Downes the prompter, contenting ourselves with observing that his versatility must have been one of his most extraordinary attributes, since his performances, in almost every walk of the drama, are asserted to have been of an exquisite description, and the list of his masterpieces comprises characters, to depict which, the deepest pathos, the broadest humour, the most intense passion, the most ludicrous quaintness, and the most dignified carriage, must by turns have been required. Hamlet and Lear, Falstaff and Mercutio, Jaffier and Othello, Timon of Athens, and Sir Toby Belch, with numerous others of the same varied description, sufficiently attest the truth of our remark; though many instances of still stronger contrast, if such be possible, might easily be collected from the list of old and forgotten plays, in the representation of which he bore a part.

In November 1671, a new theatre, in Dorset-gardens, Whitefriars, in the erection of which Davenant had been occupied some time before his death, being completed, the Duke's servants removed thither, under the management of Davenant's widow, assisted by Betterton and Harris. The emulation between the two companies was at this period very great, but after maintaining the contest for some years, with varying fortune, a junction of forces took place in October, 1681, and performances were thenceforth carried on at the house in Drury-lane. A writer in the *Biographia Britannica*, asserts that Betterton, by his skill in negotiation, was mainly instrumental in bringing about this union. Several members of the King's company had been actors before the civil wars broke out, and enjoyed a high degree of public favour, but they were now declining into the

vale of years, while Betterton had only reached the meridian of life ; and was in full possession of his powers ; so that, instead of being eclipsed by coming into immediate contact with these masters of the art, his genius became by contrast still more conspicuous.

This bed of roses, however, was not devoid of thorns ; for Rich, the principal manager of the united company, feeling secure in his monopoly of the two patents, and fancying that whatever hardships were inflicted upon the players, they could obtain no redress, began by degrees to behave in a very tyrannical manner. Against these proceedings, Betterton, who, although no longer possessing any authority in the theatre, was now universally looked upon as the head of the profession, ventured to remonstrate in very strong terms, which being deemed by the stage monarch as little short of high treason against his sovereignty, he determined to punish the offender. With this view, he practised various annoyances towards him, and thinking to abate his popularity with the town, assigned some of his most celebrated parts to young performers ; but the policy recoiled upon himself ; for the public, justly indignant at thus beholding characters weakly sustained, while their most masterly representative was laid upon the shelf, unanimously resolved to avenge his injuries. His cause was espoused by the Earl of Dorset, Lord Chamberlain, who, consulting some eminent lawyers on the subject, received their opinion, " that no patent for acting plays could tie up the hands of a succeeding sovereign from granting the like authority, where it might be thought proper to trust it." Accordingly, Betterton and several of his colleagues had the honour of an audience with King William, who listened to a detail of their grievances, and " considering them as the only part of his subjects whom he had not delivered from arbitrary power," graciously dismissed them with assurances of relief and support. A license was immediately granted ; many of the principal nobility entered into a subscription to defray the expenses of opening a theatre ; and a building in Bear-yard, Clare-market, which had previously been used as a tennis-court, being fixed upon for that purpose, was fitted up to receive an audience, and opened on the 30th of April, 1695, with Congreve's *Love for Love*, then for the first time played. The prologue and epilogue, allusive to the occasion, were delivered, the former by Betterton, and the latter by Mrs. Bracegirdle. The account of this contest with the patentees, given in the sixth chapter of Cibber's *Apology*, possesses peculiar interest at the present moment, when the question of monopoly is again being discussed ; but as the subject belongs rather to the history of the stage in general, than to that of Betterton individually, we refrain from entering into it more minutely. We cannot, however, quit this part of our narrative, without recommending those of our readers who may be curious in these matters, not to pass from Lincoln's-inn-fields into Portugal-street, without turning aside to Bear-yard, where the building in the centre will enable them to form a pretty correct opinion as to the contracted dimensions of the old theatre which occupied its site, and which was accidentally burned on the 17th of September, 1809.

At the outset of the undertaking, the revolvers under Betterton met with great success ; but their fortune, from various causes, soon became checkered ; and after remaining in their inconvenient quarters for

several years, with little ultimate profit, they resolved upon the experiment of erecting a theatre, in a style of greater splendour, and in a more fashionable part of the town. Sir J. Vanbrugh was the architect employed, and the spot selected for the purpose was the site of the present Opera House, in the Haymarket. During the progress of the building, Betterton, feeling the infirmities of age rapidly advance upon him, relinquished the government entirely to Vanbrugh and Congreve, resolving thenceforth to serve as an actor only. The sway of the new managers, however, was but brief; the house, though splendid, was extremely ill-contrived for the purposes of a theatre; the neighbourhood at that period was very thinly peopled; and the attendance was so scanty, that in the course of a season or two, the speculation was abandoned, and the company fell again under the management of Rich, at Drury-lane; when Betterton seems to have relinquished acting almost entirely: a step which he no doubt would have taken long before, had he not been compelled still to labour at the oar by his pecuniary embarrassments, arising from a disastrous circumstance, which we shall hereafter describe. At length he resolved to take a formal leave of that public whom he had delighted for half a century, and accordingly his farewell benefit was announced for the 7th of April, 1809, at Drury-lane, when he performed Valentine in *Love for Love*, supported in Ben, Mrs. Frail, and Angelica, by Dogget, Mrs. Barry, and Mrs. Bracegirdle, who, though they had all quitted the stage, resumed their original characters on this occasion, to express their esteem of gratitude towards their old associate and benefactor. "So splendid an audience," says Whincop, in his *List of the Dramatic Poets*, "was hardly ever seen at the theatre as on this occasion. The pit and boxes were laid together, at half-a-guinea a ticket; one gallery was a crown, and the other half-a-crown; and when the curtain drew up, there was almost as large an audience behind as appeared before it. But Mr. Betterton," he proceeds, "being now past seventy years of age, and lame with the gout, seemed but to burlesque the part of the youthful Valentine; and pity it was he should appear in that light, after the great dignity with which he had always till then maintained his character upon the stage. This puts me in mind of what Cicero says of the famous tragedian Æsop, who had for some time retired with great opulence and great renown; but being requested by Pompey to show himself once more, at the opening of his theatre, his voice so entirely failed him, that there was not one of the spectators (and that theatre contained 40,000 souls) but could have wished him dismissed."

The notices of theatrical matters which can be gleaned from the publications of this period, are extremely meagre and unsatisfactory; but fortunately a few days after this performance, Steele put forth the first number of the *Tatler*, in which there occurs the following mention of it:—

Will's Coffee-house, April 3, 1709.

On Thursday last was acted, for the benefit of Mr. Betterton, the celebrated comedy called *Love for Love*. Those excellent players, Mrs. Bracegirdle, and Mr. Dogget, though not at present concerned in the house, acted on that occasion. There has not been known so great a concourse of persons of distinction as at that time; the stage itself was covered with gentlemen and ladies, and when the curtain was drawn, it discovered even there a very splendid audience.

This unusual encouragement, which was given to a play for the advantage of so great an actor, gives an undeniable instance, that the true relish for manly entertainments and rational pleasures is not wholly lost. All the parts were acted to perfection. The actors were careful of their carriage, and no one was guilty of the affectation to insert witticisms of his own, but a due respect was had to the audience, for encouraging this accomplished player. It is not now doubted but plays will revive, and take their usual place in the opinion of persons of wit and merit, notwithstanding their late apostacy in favour of dress and sound. This place is very much altered since Mr. Dryden frequented it; where you used to see songs, epigrams, and satires, in the hands of every man you met, you have now only a pack of cards; and instead of the cavils about the turn of the expression, the elegance of the style, and the like, the learned now dispute only about the truth of the game. But, however, the company is altered, all have shewn a great respect for Mr. Betterton; and the very gaming part of this house have been so much touched with a sense of the uncertainty of human affairs, (which alter with themselves every moment,) that in this gentleman they pitied Mark Anthony of Rome, Hamlet of Denmark, Mithridates of Pontu, Theodosius of Greece, and Henry the Eighth of England. It is well known, he has been in the condition of each of those illustrious personages for several hours together, and behaved himself in those high stations, in all the changes of the scene, with suitable dignity. For these reasons we intend to repeat this favour to him on a proper occasion, lest he who can instruct us so well in personating feigned sorrows, should be lost to us by suffering under real ones.

Here it may be observed, that although the performance of the comedy altogether is spoken of in terms of applause, no especial mention is made of Betterton's character, which would scarcely have been the case, had it been possible to eulogize it without an utter disregard of truth. In fact, there needs not this evidence to prove that what Whincop asserts is no more than the truth; and that nothing but a reverence for misfortune, and a recollection of past services, could have made an audience endure the spectacle of a frolicsome madcap personated by a gouty hobbling old man, of three-score years and ten.

A prologue, by Congreve, and an epilogue, by Rowe, were written for this occasion. The first, which was never printed, and is probably lost, was spoken by Mrs. Bracegirdle; and the epilogue by Mrs. Barry: Betterton being supported between her and Mrs. Bracegirdle during its delivery. We annex a copy.

EPILOGUE.

"As some brave knight, who once with spear and shield,
 Had sought renown in many a well-fought field,
 No longer now with sacred fame inspir'd,
 Was to some peaceful hermitage retir'd,—
 There, if by chance disastrous tales he hears,
 Of matrons' wrongs, and captive virgins' tears,
 He feels soft pity urge his generous breast,
 And vows once more to succour the distress.
 Buckled in mail, he sallies on the plain,
 And turns him to the feats of arms again:—
 So we, to former leagues of friendship true,
 Have bid once more our peaceful homes adieu,
 To aid old *Thomas*, and to pleasure you. }
 Like errant damsels, boldly we engage, }
 Arm'd, as you see, for the defenceless stage.
 Time was, when this good man no help did lack,
 And scorn'd that any she should hold his back;

But now, so age and frailty have ordain'd,
 By two at once he's forc'd to be sustain'd.
 You see what failing nature brings man to !
 But yet let none insult ; for aught we know,
 She may not wear so well with some of you.
 Tho' old, you find his strength is not clean past,
 But, true as steel, he's metal to the last.
 If better he perform'd in days of yore,
 Yet now he gives you all that's in his pow'r :
 What can the youngest of you all do more ?
 What he has been, tho' present praise be dumb,
 Shall haply be a theme in times to come,
 As now we talk of *Roscius* and of *Rome*.
 Had you withheld your favours on this night,
 Old *Shakspeare's* ghost had ris'n to do him right ;
 With indignation, had you seen him frown
 Upon a worthless, witless, tasteless town ;
 Griev'd and repining, you had heard him say,
 " Why are the Muses' labours cast away ?
 " Or wherefore did I write, what only he could play ?"
 But since, like friends to wit, thus throng'd you meet,
 Go on, and make the generous work complete ;
 Be true to merit, and still own his cause,
 Find something for him more than bare applause ;
 In just remembrance of your pleasures past,
 Be kind, and give him a discharge at last ;
 In peace and ease life's remnant let him wear,
 And hang his consecrated buskin here !"

The profits of this performance amounted, it is said, to 500*l.* ; and stimulated by this welcome addition to his shattered fortune, as well as by gratitude to the public, and the importunities of his admirers, he resolved still to appear occasionally. Rich, instead of profiting by experience, had, by his tyranny, once more goaded the performers into mutiny, a band of whom re-opened the theatre in the Haymarket, where Betterton is believed to have acted several characters ; but as the newspapers of that period paid little attention to theatrical affairs, and few other sources of information upon the point are in existence, it is impossible to enumerate the parts he sustained. That he appeared as *Hamlet* on the 20th of September, 1709, is, however, rendered certain, by the following notice, which occurs in No. 71 of the *Tatler* :—

" I was at Will's Coffee House, reading, when I was interrupted by Mr. Greenhat, who had been that evening at the play of *Hamlet*. ' Mr. Bickerstaff,' said he ' had you been to-night at the play-house, you had seen the force of action in perfection ; your admired Mr. Betterton behaved himself so well, that though now about seventy, he acted youth ; and by the prevalent power of proper manner, gesture, and voice, appeared through the whole drama a young man of great expectation, vivacity, and enterprise. The soliloquy, where he began the celebrated sentence—' To be or not to be !'—the expostulation, where he explains with his mother in her closet ; the noble ardour after seeing his father's ghost ; and his generous distress for the death of *Ophelia*, are each of them circumstances which dwell strongly upon the minds of the audience, and would certainly affect their behaviour on any parallel occasions in their own lives.' "

His exertions during the winter of 1709, are said to have kept under those fits of gout to which he had long been periodically subject; but early in the ensuing year he was attacked by his old enemy, just before the night fixed for his benefit. The play for that evening was thus announced by Steele in the *Tatler*, No. 157, Saturday, April 8, to Tuesday, April 11 :—

“Mr. Bickerstaff, in consideration of his ancient friendship and acquaintance with Mr. Betterton, and great esteem for his merit, summons all his disciples, whether dead or living, mad or tame, toasts, smarts, dappers, pretty fellows, musicians, or scrapers, to make their appearance at the playhouse in the Haymarket, on Thursday next; when there will be a play acted for the benefit of the said Mr. Betterton.”

The performance, however, was postponed, probably in consequence of Betterton's illness, until the 25th, when *The Maid's Tragedy*, by Beaumont and Fletcher, was represented; “with a chorus between the acts, (as Whincop informs us), after the manner of the ancients, representing, in dumb show, all that had been done in the act before.” Betterton, on this occasion, sustained the character of Melantius; but being still tormented by the gout, “he submitted,” says Cibber, “by extraordinary applications, to have his foot so far relieved, that he might be able to walk on the stage in a slipper, rather than wholly disappoint his auditors. He was observed this day to have exerted a more than ordinary spirit, and met with suitable applause; but the unhappy consequence of tampering with his distemper was, that it flew into his head, and killed him in three days, after he had been above fifty years the chief ornament of the stage.”

He was buried on the 2d of May, 1710, in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey. Steele devoted a whole *Tatler* to what the *Biographia Dramatica* is pleased to term a description of the funeral, but which, in fact, is nothing more than a series of reflections excited by so interesting an occasion. Our memoir would be imperfect without this posthumous tribute, which we therefore subjoin :—

From my own Apartment, May 2, 1710.

Having received notice, that the famous actor, Mr. Betterton, was to be interred this evening in the cloisters near Westminster Abbey, I was resolved to walk thither, and see the last office done to a man whom I had always very much admired, and from whose action I had received more strong impressions of what is great and noble in human nature, than from the arguments of the most solid philosophers, or the descriptions of the most charming poets I had ever read. As the rude and untaught multitude are no way wrought upon more effectually than by seeing public punishments and executions, so men of letters and education feel their humanity most forcibly exercised, when they attend the obsequies of men who had arrived at any perfection in liberal accomplishments. Theatrical action is to be esteemed as such, except it be objected, that we cannot call that an art which cannot be attained by art. Voice, stature, motion, and other gifts, must be very bountifully bestowed by nature, or labour and industry will but push the unhappy endeavourer, in that way, the further off his wishes.

Such an actor as Mr. Betterton ought to be recorded with the same respect as Roscius among the Romans. The greatest orator has thought fit to quote his judgment, and celebrate his life. Roscius was the example to all that would form themselves into proper and winning behaviour. His action was so well

adapted to the sentiments he expressed, that the youth of Rome thought they wanted only to be virtuous to be as graceful in their appearance as Roscius. The imagination took a lovely impression of what was great and good; and they who never thought of setting up for the arts of imitation, became themselves inimitable characters.

There is no human invention so aptly calculated for the forming a free-born people as that of a theatre. Tully reports, that the celebrated player of whom I am speaking used frequently to say, "The perfection of an actor is only to become what he is doing." Young men, who are too inattentive to receive lectures, are irresistibly taken with performances. Hence it is, that I extremely lament the little relish the gentry of this nation have at present for the just and noble representations in some of our tragedies. The operas, which are of late introduced, can leave no trace behind them that can be of service beyond the present moment. To sing and to dance, are accomplishments very few have any thoughts of practising; but to speak justly and move gracefully, is what every man thinks he does perform, or wishes he did.

I have hardly a notion that any performer of antiquity could surpass the action of Mr. Betterton in any of the occasions in which he has appeared on our stage. The wonderful agony he appeared in, when he examined the circumstance of the handkerchief in Othello; the mixture of love that intruded upon his mind upon the innocent answers Desdemona makes, betrayed in his gesture such a variety and vicissitude of passions, as would admonish a man to be afraid of his own heart, and perfectly convince him, that it is to stab it, to admit that worst of daggers, jealousy. Whoever reads in his closet this admirable scene, will find that he cannot, except he has as warm an imagination as Shakspeare himself, find any but dry, incoherent and broken sentences. But a reader that has seen Betterton act it, observes, there could not be a word added; that longer speeches had been unnatural, nay impossible, in Othello's circumstances. The charming passage in the same tragedy, where he tells the manner of winning the affection of his mistress, was urged with so moving and graceful an energy, that while I walked in the cloisters, I thought of him with the same concern as if I waited for the remains of a person who had in real life done all that I had seen him represent. The gloom of the place, and faint lights before the ceremony appeared, contributed to the melancholy disposition I was in; and I began to be extremely afflicted, that Brutus and Cassius had any difference; that Hotspur's gallantry was so unfortunate; and that the mirth and good humour of Falstaff could not exempt him from the grave. Nay, this occasion in me, who look upon the distinctions amongst men to be merely scenical, raised reflections upon the emptiness of all human perfection and greatness in general; and I could not but regret, that the sacred heads which lie buried in the neighbourhood of this little portion of earth in which my poor old friend is deposited, are returned to dust as well as he, and that there is no difference in the grave between the imaginary and the real monarch. This made me say of human life itself with Macbeth—

"To-morrow, to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in a stealing pace from day to day.
To the last moment of recorded time!
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
To their eternal night! Out, out short candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more."*

The mention I have here made of Mr. Betterton, for whom I had, as long as I have known any thing, a very great esteem and gratitude for the pleasure he gave me, can do him no good; but it may possibly be of service to the unhappy

* This is but one specimen, out of a thousand, of the careless manner in which the writers of Steele's day allowed themselves to quote the most celebrated authors. Let the reader compare the passage with Shakspeare's genuine text, and he will perceive variations in almost every line.

woman he has left behind him, to have it known that this great tragedian was never in a scene half so moving, as the circumstances of his affairs created at his departure. His wife, after the cohabitation of forty years in the strictest amity, has long pined away with a sense of his decay, as well in his person as his little fortune; and in proportion to that, she has herself decayed both in her health and reason. Her husband's death, added to her age and infirmities, would certainly have determined her life, but that the greatness of her distress has been her relief, by a present deprivation of her senses. This absence of reason is her best defence against age, sorrow, poverty and sickness. I dwell upon this account so distinctly, in obedience to a certain great spirit, who hides her name, and has by letter applied to me to recommend to her some object of compassion, from whom she may be concealed.

This, I think, is a proper occasion for exerting such heroic generosity; and as there is an ingenuous shame in those who have known better fortune to be reduced to receive obligations, as well as a becoming pain in the truly generous to receive thanks; in this case both those delicacies are preserved; for the person obliged is as incapable of knowing her benefactress, as her benefactress is unwilling to be known by her.

This article has already extended to so great a length, that we are necessarily compelled to reserve for our next number some further accounts of Betterton's private and professional character, together with that of his wife; a description of his person; a list of his writings; and a few illustrative anecdotes.

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Caverswall, Staffordshire, Jan. 21. 1831.

NOTANDA DRAMATICA.

No. IV.

FEMALE MANAGERS.

THE address spoken by Madame Vestris, at the opening of the Olympic theatre, commenced thus:—

"Noble and gentle! Matrons!—Patrons!—Friends!

Before you here a vent'rous woman bends,—

A warrior woman, who in strife embarks,

The first of all dramatic Joan of Arcs!

Cheer on the enterprise thus dared by me,—

The first that ever led a company.

For sure, until this very hour and age,

A Lessee Lady never own'd a stage."

This is allowable enough in an address, but not perfectly correct; for the Duke's company, after the death of Sir Wm. Davenant, was governed by his widow; and several instances might be cited in which women, if not sole conductors of London theatres, have had a large share in the management. Moreover, Mrs. Henry Siddons has but just terminated a career of some years as the Edinburgh lessee; and one of the most successful theatrical speculations on record, was Downton's mother-in-law, Mrs. Baker, of the Canterbury circuit, respecting whom some amusing stories are told in Tom Dibdin's Reminiscences.

READING PARTS.

This resource of "imperfect actors" seems to have been practised from the very infancy of the stage. The following passage is from Greene's *Groat's Worth of Witt*, black letter edition, 1592:—

"Leucanio, being far in love, had a good meaning to utter his mind; but, wanting fit words, he stood like a trewant, that lackt a

prompter ; or a player, that being out of his part at his first entrance, is faine to haue the booke, to speake what hee should performe."

SHERLEY, THE PLAYER.

On fol. 554 of Prynne's laborious invective against theatres, the "*Histrion-Mastix*," 1633, after enumerating various judgments which have overtaken stage-players, he inserts the following marginal note :—

"Witnesse Sherley, slaine suddenly by Sir Edward Bishop, whiles hee was drunke, as most report."

This is the only mention I ever met with of an actor so named. If any reader is in possession of further information respecting him, calculated to throw light upon Prynne's allusion, I should feel much obliged by his communicating it.

SHAKSPEARE.

In Mr. Hibbert's valuable library, sold in 1829, lot 4325, was an extremely rare 4to volume, containing a mention of Shakspeare, which appears to have escaped the notice of all his biographers. The work is entitled, *The Academy of Love*, by Jo. Johnson, 1641 ; and the passage alluded to occurs in an account of the English poets :—

"There was also Shakespeere, who (as Cupid informed me) creeps into the women's closets about bed-time ; and if it were not for some of the old out-of-date grandames, (who are set over the rest as their tutoresses) the young sparkish girles would read in Shakespeere day and night."

KEEPING PLACES.

The subjoined extract from the *Universal Magazine*, for May, 1805, may afford a useful piece of information to the frequenters of theatres :—

"In a cause lately tried at the Warwick assizes, the Judge laid it down as law, that the managers or proprietors of a theatre may direct the servants of the house to remove any persons that have got possession of places against the rules of the theatre ; and if an assault be committed by such removal, his or their conduct is justified by law."

"THE GOOD OLD TIMES."

It is with the stage as with every thing else. People are always regretting the actors and managers that are gone, and decrying those of the present day as the worst of their kind. Players they say have degenerated, and plays were never so vile ; the theatre is abandoned to sound and show, and the proprietors think only of filling their coffers, regardless of the corruption and ruin of the drama, &c. &c. &c. Would not any one swear that the following passage from the preface to Kenrick's *Love in the Suds*, was written in 1831 ? I have heard the same sentiments expressed in the same words, and read them in magazines and newspapers, five thousand times. All went wrong, it seems, in Kenrick's time, and yet that was the period which we are now taught to look back upon as the golden age of the English theatre :—

"When I shall have leisure to draw a faithful portraiture of Mr. Garrick, not only from his behaviour to me in particular, but from his conduct towards poets, players, and the town in general, I doubt not to convince the most partial of his admirers, that he hath accu-

mulated a fortune, as manager, by the meanest and most meretricious devices, and that the theatrical props, which have long supported his exalted reputation, as an actor, have been raised on the ruins of the English stage."

WYCHERLEY.

His first wife, by her whims and jealousy, made him wretched; yet he is said to have declared, that though he could not bear the thought of again *living* married, he was resolved to *die* so; and accordingly, eleven days before his death, married a young lady with a fortune of 1500*l*. This characteristic anecdote receives confirmation from the following notices, which occur in a forgotten publication, called *Weekly Remarks on the most Material News, Foreign and Domestic*, 1716:—

"December 31, 1714.—Mr. Wycherley, who has wrote several plays and poems, and among others, the comedy called *The Country Wife*, has lately taken one of twenty-four to himself, thinking it time to look toward heaven."

"January 7, 1715.—On Sunday morning, the 1st instant, about three of the clock, died Mr. Wycherley, (whom we lately mentioned to be married,) aged 75."

JULIUS CÆSAR.

In Lee's Dedication of his *Lucius Junius Brutus*, he seems to assert, what was probably a stage tradition in his days, that Shakspeare's play was ill-received, when first performed. "Shakspeare's *Brutus*," he says, "with much adoe beat himself into the heads of a blockish age, so knotty were the oaks he had to deal with."

STAGE REFINEMENT.

We hear much of the gross and vulgar practices which at present are tolerated upon the stage; but I should like to see how an audience would now endure such an exhibition as the following, which occurs in *The Mistake*, of that polished author, Sir John Vanbrugh.

Sancho and Jacintha, two lovers, quarrel, and agree to return each other's love-tokens:—

"*Sancho*—Here's the enchanted handkerchief you were pleased to endear with your precious blood, when the violence of your love at dinner t'other day, made you cut your fingers.—There? [*Blows his nose in it, and gives it her.*]

"*Jacintha*.—The rascal so provokes me, I won't even keep his paltry garters from him. D'ye see these, you pitiful, beggarly scoundrel you?—There, take 'em; there! [*She takes her garters off, and slaps them about his face.*]"

THEOBALD'S SHAKSPEARE

Being delayed long after the time at which it was announced for publication, Theobald was attacked by the author of a work called *Harlequin Horace*, who reproached him with only doing things by halves. On this, a writer in the *Grub-street Journal* drew up an ironical defence of the procrastinating editor, asserting that the charge was malicious and groundless, "for" said he, "all Mr. T.'s subscribers, I am sure, will testify he is far from ever having done *half* of anything he undertook, having only seen his proposals and specimen."

THE DUKE OF BRUNSWICK

Was married to the Princess Royal, on the 16th of January, 1764, and on the 19th, they went with the King and Queen to Covent-garden theatre, to see *No One's Enemy but his Own*, and the afterpiece

of *Perseus and Andromeda*. The *Scots Magazine* gives the following description of what took place on the occasion :—

"The Prince retiring soon after the play began, the audience were agitated by various surmises. The fact was, his Highness, as he did not well understand the language of the players, took that opportunity to pay his compliments to the Royal Society, of which he was elected a fellow ; and Lord Morton, being in the chair, made him a polite speech, in the name of the Society, which his Highness answered without hesitation.* On his return to the play, there was a general clap."

Caverswall, January 18, 1831. • •

NOTICES OF THE LIVES AND WRITINGS OF OUR EARLY DRAMATISTS.

No. IX.

(Continued from page 368. Vol. II.)

FRANCIS BEAUMONT AND JOHN FLETCHER.

FRANCIS BEAUMONT was descended from an ancient family of his name, at Grace Dieu, in Leicestershire, where he was born about 1585 or 1586, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. His grandfather, John, had been Master of the Rolls, and his father, Francis, one of the Judges of the Common Pleas. He was educated at Cambridge, and afterwards was a student in the Inner Temple ; but it does not appear, however, that he made any great proficiency in the law. Out of fifty-three plays, which are collected together as the joint labours of Beaumont and Fletcher, Mr. Beaumont was concerned in the greater part, yet he did not live to complete his thirtieth year, death summoning him away on the 9th of March, 1615. He was interred in the entrance of St. Benedict's Chapel, Westminster Abbey, without tomb or inscription. He left a daughter, Frances, who died in Leicestershire ; and who, having in her possession several MS. poems of her father's, lost them in her voyage from Ireland, where she had resided some time in the family of the Duke of Ormond.

John Fletcher was not more meanly descended than his gifted colleague. His father, the Rev. Dr. Fletcher, having been first made Bishop of Bristol by Queen Elizabeth, and afterwards, by the same monarch, in 1594, translated to the rich and honourable see of London.† Our poet was born in 1576, and educated at Cambridge, where he made a great proficiency in his studies. His natural vivacity, for which he was remarkable, soon rendered him a devotee to the muses ; and his fortunate connexion with a genius equal to his own, raised him to one of the highest places in the temple of poetical fame. He was born nearly ten years before Mr. Beaumont, and survived him about the same length of time ; the plague, which

* The President and the players, I take for granted, spoke in different languages ; or how did it happen that his Highness, who could not understand the latter, not only readily comprehended the former, but delivered an extempore reply ?

† Dr. Fletcher attended Mary Queen of Scots at her execution, in 1587, and imperturbed her to change her religion. He was twice married, which gave such offence to the virgin queen, that she ordered him to be suspended from his bishopric. He was afterwards restored, but the disgrace is said to have hastened his death. He died suddenly in his chair, at London, in 1596.

happened in 1625, involving him in its general destruction, on the 19th of August in that year, in his forty-ninth year. He was buried in the church of St. Saviour, Southwark, without any memorial.

These authors, the Pylades and Orestes of literature, are remarkable on several accounts. Their friendship presents the singular and pleasing spectacle of two great geniuses so closely united in their feelings and pursuits, that in the numerous dramas which they wrote conjointly, it is utterly impossible to distinguish to which of them we are indebted for any particular scene or character. Their compositions are so homogeneous, that were we not assured of the contrary, we should ascribe them, without hesitation, to the efforts of a single mind. Here it may be observed, that nothing in Shakespeare's age is more worthy of commemoration, than the good understanding which subsisted among the galaxy of master-spirits that adorned those times. They lived together like a family of brothers, no petty jealousies disturbed their community; we continually find them advancing, without ostentation, each other's labours, and engaged in friendly competition of good offices. The poetry of Beaumont and Fletcher's dramas is often exceedingly fine; they are frequently prosaic and even common-place, but these failings are redeemed by bursts of passion and eloquence truly overpowering. In nice discrimination of character too, they are by no means deficient, and nothing can excuse the depravity of taste which has consigned their works to dust and silence. The pieces they have left behind them bear the following titles and dates:—

COMEDIES.

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| The Woman-Hater, 1607. | Monsieur Thomas, 1639. |
| The Knight of the Burning Pestle, 1613. | Wit without Money, 1639. |
| The Scornful Lady, 1616. | The Coronation, 1640. |
| The Elder Brother, 1637. | Rule a Wife and have a Wife, 1640. |
| | The Night Walker, 1640. |

TRAGEDIES.

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Cupid's Revenge, 1615. | Thierry and Theodoret, 1621. |
| The Maid's Tragedy, 1619. | Rollo, 1640. |

TRAGI-COMEDIES.

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| A King and no King, 1619. | The Two Noble Kinsmen, 1634. |
| Philaster, 1620. | |

The following thirty-five plays were first published together in folio, 1647; but are, together with the preceding sixteen, in folio, 1679.

COMEDIES.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| The Spanish Curate. | The Sea Voyage. |
| The Little French Lawyer. | The Pilgrim. |
| The Noble Gentleman. | The Woman's Prize. |
| The Captain. | Love's Cure. |
| Beggar's Bush. | Wit at several Weapons. |
| The Coxcomb. | Love's Pilgrimage. |
| The Chances. | The Wild Goose Chase. |
| The Maid of the Mill. | |

TRAGEDIES.

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| The false One | The Double Marriage. |
| The Prophetess. | Valentinian. |
| Bonduca. | |

TRAGI-COMEDIES.

The Mad Lover.	The Nice Valour.
The Custom of the Country.	The Knight of Malta.
The Loyal Subject,	The Honest Man's Fortune.
The Laws of Candy.	The Queen of Corinth.
The Lover's Progress.	Women Pleased.
The Island Princess.	A Wife for a Month.
The Humorous Lieutenant	The Fair Maid of the Inn.

They also wrote, "*Four Plays in One*," which bear the following titles:—1. *The Triumph of Honour*. 2. *The Triumph of Love*. 3. *The Triumph of Death*. 4. *The Triumph of Time*. The first two may properly be called tragi-comedies, the third a tragedy, and the last an opera. During the joint lives of these great poets, it appears that they wrote nothing separately, excepting one little piece by each, which seemed of too trivial a nature for either to require assistance in; namely, *The Faithful Shepherdess*, a pastoral, by Fletcher, and *The Masque of Grays Inn Gentlemen*, by Beaumont. Of Beaumont and Fletcher, the latter of whom he calls a true Englishman, Dryden observes,—"Their plots were generally more regular than Shakspeare's, especially those which were made before Beaumont's death; and they understood and imitated the conversation of gentlemen much better, whose wild debaucheries and quickness of wit in repartees, no poet before them could paint as they have done. Humour, which Ben Jonson derived from particular persons, they made it not their business to describe; they represented all the passions very lively, but above all, love. I am apt to believe the English language in them arrived at its highest perfection; what words have since been taken in, are rather superfluous than ornamental. Their plays are now the most pleasant and frequent entertainments of the stage; two of theirs being acted through the year for one of Shakspeare's or Jonson's; the reason is, because there is a certain gaiety in their comedies, and pathos in their more serious plays, which suits generally with all men's humours. Shakspeare's language is likewise a little obsolete, and Ben Jonson's wit comes short of theirs."*

TRUE NOBILITY.

"For to the basely born,
If not base born, detracts not from the bounty
Of Nature's freedom, or an honest birth.
Nobility, claim'd by the right of blood,
Shows chiefly that our ancestors deserved
What we inherit; but that man, whose actions
Purchase a real merit to himself,
And rank him in the file of praise and honour,
Creates his own advancement."

The Fair Maid of the Inn.

VIRTUE MAINTAINED IN AFFLICTION.

"Oh! most noble Sir,
Though I have lost my fortune, and lost you
For a worthy father, yet I will not lose

* Dryden's Essay on Dramatic Poesy.

My former virtue. My integrity
Shall not yet forsake me, but as the wild ivy
Spreads and thrives better in some piteous ruin
Of tower, or defaced temple, than it does
Planted by a new building, so shall I
Make my adversity my instrument
To wind me up into a full content."

The Fair Maid of the Inn.

INVOCATION TO SLEEP.

"Care-charming sleep, thou easer of all woes,
Brother to death, sweetly thyself dispose
On this afflicted prince : fall like a cloud,
In gentle showers ; give nothing that is loud,
Or painful to his slumbers ; easy, sweet,
And as a purling stream, thou son of night,
Pass by his troubled senses ; sing his pain,
Like hollow murmuring wind, or silver rain.
Into this prince gently, oh ! gently glide !
And kiss him into slumbers, like a bride !" — *Valentinian.*

FROM THE WOMAN-HATER.

Lazarello, a foolish table-hunter, has requested an introduction to the Duke of Milan, who has had a fine lamprey presented to him. Before the introduction takes place, he finds that the Duke has given the fish away ; so that his wish to be known to him goes with it ; and part of the drollery of the passage arises from his uneasiness at being detained by the consequence of his own request, and his fear lest he should be too late for the lamprey elsewhere.

Count. (Aside to the Duke.) Let me entreat your Grace to stay a little,
To know a gentleman, to whom yourself
Is much beholding. He hath made the sport
For your whole court these eight years, on my knowledge.

Duke. His name.

Count. Lazarello.

Duke. I heard of him this morning ; which is he ?

Count. (Aside to Laz.) Lazarello, pluck up thy spirits. Thy fortune is now raising. The Duke calls for thee, and thou shalt be acquainted with him.

Laz. He's going away, and I must of necessity stay here upon business.

Count. 'Tis all one ; thou shalt know him first.

Laz. Stay a little. If he should offer to take me with him, and by that means I should lose that I seek for ! But if he should, I will not go with him.

Count. Lazarello, the Duke stays. Wilt thou lose this opportunity ?

Laz. How must I speak to him ?

Count. 'Twas well thought of. You must not talk to him as you do to an ordinary man, honest plain sense ; but you must wind about him. For example, if he should ask you what o'clock it is, you must not say, " If it please your Grace, 'tis nine ;" but thus, " Thrice three o'clock, so please my sovereign ;" or thus—

" Look how many muses there doth dwell
Upon the sweet banks of the learned well,
And just so many strokes the clock hath struck ;"—

And so forth. And you must now and then enter into a description.

Laz. I hope I shall do it.

Count. Come.—May it please your Grace to take note of a gentleman, well seen, deeply read, and thoroughly grounded in the hidden knowledge of all salads and pot-herbs whatsoever ?

Duke. I shall desire to know him more inwardly.

Laz. I kiss the ox-hide of your Grace's foot.

Count. (Aside to Laz.) Very well. Will your Grace question him a little?

Duke. How old are you?

Laz. Full eight and twenty several almanacks
Have been compiled, all for several years,
Since first I drew this breath. Four 'prenticeships
Have I most truly served in this world :
And eight and twenty times hath Phœbus' car
Run out his yearly course, since——

Duke. I understand you, Sir.

Lucio. How like an ignorant poet he talks !

Duke. You are eight and twenty years old ? What time of the day do you hold it to be ?

Laz. About the time that mortals whet their knives
On thresholds, on their shoesoles, and on stairs.
Now bread is grating, and the testy cook
Hath much to do now ; now the tables all——

Duke. 'Tis almost dinner time ?

Laz. Your Grace doth apprehend me very rightly.

A STUDY.

"Sordid and dunghill minds, composed of earth,
In that gross element fix all their happiness :
But purer spirits, purged and refined,
Shake off that clog of human frailty. Give me
Leave to enjoy myself. That place that does
Contain my books, the best companions, is
To me a glorious court, where hourly I
Converse with the old sages and philosophers ;
And sometimes, for variety, I confer
With kings, and emperors, and weigh their counsels ;
Calling their victories, if unjustly got,
Unto a strict account ; and, in my fancy,
Deface their ill-placed statues. Can I then
Part with such constant pleasures, to embrace
Uncertain vanities ? No ; be it your care
To augment a heap of wealth ; it shall be mine
To increase in knowledge. Lights there, for my study !"
The Elder Brother.

SOLITUDE.

"These wild fields are my gardens ;
The crystal rivers they afford their waters,
And grudge not their sweet streams to quench afflictions ;
The hollow rocks their beds, which though they're hard,
(The emblems of a doting lover's fortune,)
Yet they are quiet ; and the weary slumbers
The eyes catch there, softer than beds of down, friend ;
The birds my bell to call me to devotion ;
My book the story of my wand'ring life,
In which I find more hours due to repentance
Than time hath told me yet."
The Lover's Progress.

DEATH.

"'Tis of sleeps the sweetest.
Children begin it to us, strong men seek it,
And kings, from height of all their painted glories,

Fall like spent exhalations, to this centre ;
And those are fools that fear it, or imagine
A few unhandsome pleasures, or life's profits,
Can recompense this place, and mad that stay it,
Till age blow out their lights, or rotten humours
Bring them dispers'd to th' earth."

Thierry and Theodoret.

"Death is unwelcome never,
Unless it be to tortured minds and sick souls
That make their own hells : it is such a benefit
When it comes crown'd with honour, shews so sweet too,
Though they paint it ugly, that's but to restrain us—
For every living thing would love it else,
Fly boldly to their peace ere Nature call'd them ;
The rest we have from labour and from trouble
Is some incitement ; every thing alike,
The poor slave that lies private has his liberty
As amply as his master, in that tomb ;
The earth as light upon him, and the flowers
That grow about him smell as sweet, and flourish ;
But when we love with honour to our ends,
When memory and virtues are our mourners,
What pleasures there ! they're infinite, Evanthe."

A Wife for a Month.

The following charming song, by Beaumont, which it is evident Milton had in view when he composed his *Il Penseroso*, is to be found in the comedy of *The Nice Valour ; or, The Passionate Madman*.

"Hence, all ye vain delights,
As short as are the nights
Wherein you spend your folly !
There's nought in this life sweet,
If men were wise to see't,
But only melancholy ;
Oh, sweetest melancholy !
Welcome, folded arms, and fixed eyes,
A sigh that piercing mortifies,
A look that's fasten'd to the ground,
A tongue chain'd up, without a sound !
Fountain-heads, and pathless groves,
Places which pale passion loves !
Moonlight walks, when all the fowls
Are warmly hous'd, save bats and owls !
A midnight bell, a parting groan !
These are the sounds we feed upon ;
Then stretch our bones, in a still gloomy valley.
Nothing's so dainty sweet, as lovely melancholy."

The two following pieces are also by Beaumont.

ON THE LIFE OF MAN.

"Like to the falling of a star,
Or as the flight of eagles are,
Or like the fresh spring's gaudy hue,
Or silver drops of morning dew ;
Or like a wind that chafes the flood,
Or bubbles which on water stood,
E'en such is man, whose borrow'd light
Is straight call'd in, and paid to-night."

The wind blows and the bubble dies,
The spring entomb'd in autumn lies;
The dew's dried up—the star is shot,
The flight is past, and man forgot."

MIRTH.

"'Tis mirth that fills the veins with blood,
More than wine, or sleep, or food;
Let each man keep his mind at ease—
No man dies of that disease.
He that would his body keep
From diseases, must not weep:
But whoever laughs and sings,
Never he, his body brings
Into fevers, gouts, and rheums,
Or ling'ringly his life consumes;
But contented lives for aye,
The more he laughs, the more he may."

T. H. K.

THE ROVERS; OR, THE DOUBLE ARRANGEMENT.

BY THE LATE RIGHT HON. GEORGE CANNING AND THE PRESENT
GEORGE COLMAN.

(Concluded from page 365, Vol. II.)

ACT IV.

SCENE — *The inn-door — Diligence drawn up.* CASIMERE appears superintending the package of his portmanteaus, and giving directions to the porters.

Enter BEEFINGTON and PUDDINGFIELD.

Pud. Well, Coachey, have you got two inside places?

Coach. Yes, your honour.

Pud. [*Seems to be struck with CASIMERE'S appearance. He surveys him earnestly, without paying any attention to the Coachman, then doubtingly pronounces*]—Casimere!

Cas. [*Turning round rapidly, recognizes Puddingfield, and embraces him.*] My Puddingfield!

Pud. My Casimere!

Cas. What, Beefington too! [*discovering him.*] Then is my joy complete.

Beef. Our fellow-traveller, as it seems?

Cas. Yes, Beefington—but wherefore to Hamburg?

Beef. Oh, Casimere*—to fly—to fly—to return—England—our country—Magna Charta—it is liberated—a new æra—House of Commons—opposition—

Cas. What a contrast! you are flying to liberty and your home—I driven from my home by tyranny—am exposed to domestic slavery in a foreign country.

Beef. How domestic slavery?

Cas. Too true—two wives—[*slowly, and with a dejected air—then, after a pause*]—You knew my Cecilia?

Pud. Yes, five years ago.

Cas. Soon after that period I went upon a visit to a lady in Wetteravia—my Matilda was under her protection—alighting at a peasant's cabin, I saw her on a charitable visit, spreading bread and butter for the children,

* See Count Benyowsky; or, the Conspiracy of Kamtschatka, where Crustiew, an old gentleman of much sagacity, talks the following nonsense:—

"Crustiew. [*With youthful energy, and an air of secrecy and confidence.*]—To fly, to fly, to the Isles of Marian—the Island of Tinian—a terrestrial paradise. Free—free—a mild climate—a new-created sun—wholesome fruits—harmless inhabitants—and liberty—tranquillity."

in a light blue riding-habit. The simplicity of her appearance—the fineness of the weather—all conspired to interest me—my heart moved to hers, as if by a magnetic sympathy—we wept, embraced, and went home together—she became the mother of my Pantalowsky. But five years of enjoyment have not stifled the reproaches of my conscience—her Rogero is languishing in captivity—if I could restore her to *him*!

Beef. Let us rescue him.

Cas. Will without power,* is like children playing at soldiers.

Beef. Courage without power,† is like a consumptive running footman.

Cas. Courage without power is a contradiction.‡—Ten brave men might set all Quedlinburgh at defiance.

Beef. Ten brave men—but where are they to be found?

Cas. I will tell you—marked you the waiter?

Beef. The waiter?—[*doubtingly.*]

Cas. [In a confidential tone.] No waiter, but a Knight Templar. Returning from the crusade, he found his order dissolved, and his person proscribed. He dissembled his rank, and embraced the profession of a waiter. I have made sure of him already. There are, besides, an Austrian and a Prussian grenadier. I have made them abjure their national enmity, and they have sworn to fight henceforth in the cause of freedom. These, with Young Pottingen, the Waiter, and ourselves, make seven—the Troubadour, with his two attendant minstrels, will complete the ten.

Beef. Now then for the execution [with enthusiasm.]

Pud. Yes, my boys—for the execution [clapping them on the back.]

Wait. But hist! We are observed.

Troub. Let us by a song conceal our purposes.

RECITATIVE ACCOMPANIED.§

Casimere.

Hist! hist! nor let the airs that blow
From night's cold lungs, our purpose know!

Puddingfield.

Let silence, mother of the dumb,

Beefington.

Press on each lip her palsied thumb!

Waiter.

Let privacy, allied to sin,
That loves to haunt the tranquil inn,

Grenadier and Troubadour.

And conscience start, when she shall view,
The mighty deed we mean to do!

GENERAL CHORUS—*Con Spirito.*

Then friendship swear, ye faithful bands,
Swear to save a shackled hero!
See where yon abbey frowning stands!
Rescue, rescue, brave Rogero!

Casimere.

Thralld in a monkish tyrant's fetters,
Shall great Rogero hopeless lie?

Young Pottingen.

In my pocket I have letters,
Saying, "Help me, or I die."

Cas.—Beef.—Pud.—Gren.—Troub.—

Wait.—and Pot.—with enthusiasm.

(Allegro Allegretto.)

Let us fly, let us fly,
Let us help, ere he die!

[*Exeunt omnes, waving their hats.*]

SCENE—*The abbey-gate, with ditches, drawbridges, and spikes. Time, about an hour before sunrise. The conspirators appear as if in ambuscade, whispering and consulting together, in expectation of the signal for attack. The WAITER is habited as a Knight Templar, in the dress of his order, with the cross on his breast, and the scallop on his shoulder. PUDDINGFIELD and BEEFINGTON armed with blunderbusses and pocket-*

* See Count Benyowsky, as before.

† See Count Benyowsky.

‡ See Count Benyowsky again. From which play this and the preceding references are taken word for word. We acquit the Germans of such reprobate silly stuff. It must be the translator's.

§ We believe this song to be copied, with a small variation in metre and meaning, from a song in Count Benyowsky; or, the Conspiracy of Kamtschatka, where the conspirators join in a chorus, for fear of being overheard.

pistols; the grenadiers in their proper uniforms. The TROUBADOUR, with his attendant minstrels, bring up the rear.—Martial music.—The conspirators come forward, and present themselves before the gate of the abbey.—Alarum.—Firing of pistols.—The convent appear in arms upon the walls.—The drawbridge is let down.—A body of choristers and lay-brothers attempt a sally, but are beaten back, and the verger killed.—The besieged attempt to raise the drawbridge — PUDDINGFIELD and BEEFINGTON press forward with alacrity, throw themselves upon the drawbridge, and, by the exertion of their weight, prescree it in a state of depression.—The other besiegers join them, and attempt to force the entrance, but without effect.—PUDDINGFIELD makes the signal for the battering-ram.—Enter QUINTUS CURTIUS and MARCUS CURIUS DENTATUS, in their proper military habits, preceded by the Roman Eagle—The

rest of their legion are employed in bringing forward a battering-ram, which plays for a few minutes to slow time, till the entrance is forced. After a short resistance, the besiegers rush in with shouts of victory.

Scene changes to the interior of the abbey.—The inhabitants of the convent are seen flying in all directions.

[PRIOR is brought forward between two grenadiers.]

The COUNT OF WEIMAR, who had been found feasting in the refectory, is brought in manacled. He appears transported with rage, and gnaws his chains.—The PRIOR remains insensible, as if stupified with grief. BEEFINGTON takes the keys of the dungeon, which are hanging at the PRIOR's girdle, and makes a sign for them both to be led away into confinement.—Exeunt PRIOR and COUNT, properly guarded.—The rest of the conspirators disperse in search of the dungeon where ROGERO is confined.

MEMOIR OF MR. MACREADY.

WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY, the son of a respectable actor and manager,* was born in Charles-street, Fitzroy-square, in the year 1793. From a private academy of eminence, he was removed to Rugby School, where his talents and energies were so beneficially exerted, that few students have left that ancient seminary with a higher reputation for classical acquirement, or a superior character for successful study. Having been disappointed in his original destination, the bar, he directed his views to the drama; and before he had attained the age of seventeen, assumed the part of Romeo, with such success, at the Birmingham theatre, that his future lot became decided. In Newcastle, Bath, Dublin, and Liverpool, the reputation of Mr. Macready had been so brilliantly established, that about 1815 the proprietors of Covent Garden wished him to accept a temporary engagement upon those boards, for the purpose of supporting Miss O'Neill, who had just then commenced her resplendent career. This proposal was rejected, and he afterwards entered upon a negotiation with the rival establishment, which was rendered inconclusive by the offers of the Committee not being considered sufficiently liberal. In 1826, the Covent Garden managers having made him an equitable proposal, he appeared at that theatre on September the 16th, as Orestes, in *The Distrest Mother*.

* For a Memoir of Mr. Macready's father, see p. 103, Vol. I.

The period at which Macready made his metropolitan debut was by no means an auspicious one for a tragic performer. Kean was almost in the zenith of his fame; John Kemble had reappeared with new interest and attraction, from its being announced that he shortly intended leaving the stage; while Young held no mean station in public opinion. To choose a character which would not clash or cause injurious comparisons with any of the above favourites, must have been a task of difficulty. His selection, though sensible in some respects, was not capable of exhibiting his powers to advantage, if we except the final scene. In this scene he elicited great applause, and the critics the next day were almost unanimous in their commendation. The tragedy was, however, only performed three times. On the 30th of the same month he personated Benvolio, in *The Italian Lover*. In the last act, where the accused and conscience-stricken murderer strives to conceal his emotions, he displayed an astonishing degree of passion and sensibility. This tragedy was but once repeated. On the 10th of the following month he personated Othello to Mr. Young's Iago, and on the 15th Iago to the above gentleman's Othello. Neither of these characters was repeated. His next performance was in a new drama, *The Slave*, in which he played Gambia, and added considerably to his reputation. The next two seasons he represented a variety of characters, chiefly of secondary importance; the principal ones being in the hands of Young and Booth. But in the year 1819, these gentlemen having left Covent Garden, a wide field was left open for the display of his talents. During that and the following years he appeared in *Coriolanus*, *Macbeth*, *Virginius*, *Henry IV.*, *Mirandola*, *Iachimo*, *Richard III.*, *Shylock*, *Romeo*, *Zanga*, and by the originality and force he displayed, fully established his claims to the title of a first-rate tragedian. In 1821 he restored to the stage Shakspeare's *Life and Death of King Richard the Third*. As an acting play, we must confess that, in our humble opinion, it is greatly inferior to Cibber's compilation; and such we suspect to be the opinion of the majority of the public, for though Macready was enthusiastically applauded, the tragedy was acted only three nights.

In the year 1823 he left Covent Garden for Drury Lane, where he opened in *Virginius* to a crowded house. He played in succession *Hamlet*, *Rolla*, *Leontes*, (*Winter's Tale*), *Caius Gracchus*, a tragedy by Knowles. In 1824 he revived Massinger's beautiful and eloquent tragedy of *The Fatal Dowry*, the run of which was stopped by his severe illness. In 1826 he made a highly advantageous trip to America, and soon after his return, visited Paris, where he was much admired in most of his principal characters. During the last two years he has been playing in the provinces.

As we think, no instance in the history of the stage can be pointed out, of an actor standing in a more important and interesting light than Macready does at the present moment (for on him, and on him alone, are the entire hopes of the lovers of tragedy fixed). A brief inquiry into those qualifications which render an actor worthy of the tragic diadem, including an examination of Mr. Macready's pretensions to that honour, may not be altogether misplaced.

It has been decided, that there are three essential requisites for perfection in a tragic performer. First, the exterior advantages of figure

and face. With Macready's figure we have no fault to find ; of the latter we may say, that, though his countenance is capable of expressing deep passion, and rendering the most powerful images of mental agony, it is without that symmetry and proportion which are associated with our ideas of classical grandeur and repose ; yet the eye that examines his features for the purpose of censure, soon forgets its object in the fervour and energy of their expression. The second requisite, is a good understanding or sound judgment ; and here we fear we cannot compliment Macready so highly as we could wish ; for whether it arises from his anxiety to be thought an original actor, or from a want of this important requisite, he frequently hurries over those passages which his predecessors were wont to make so effective ; and when he has attempted new readings, it certainly has not been for the gratification or improvement of his auditors. He is said to study deeply, and we think too deeply ; for in his search after novel readings, he has often given a forced construction to the text, and extorted meanings which the author never dreamt of. In *Macbeth*, where the lady inquires,

When the king goes hence ?

Her husband replies,

To-morrow, as he purposes.

Macready delivers the words, "*as he purposes*," with a peculiar emphasis, as if he had already determined on the murder of Duncan. This reading is in direct violation of the author's meaning. Similar errors of judgment could be pointed out.

When we take into consideration the statue-like stiffness of his attitudes, the colloquial freedom of his address, and the rapid and indistinct manner in which he delivers some of our greatest poets' most eloquent addresses, pounding sentiment, remonstrance, and contempt into one unintelligible mass of "sound and fury, signifying nothing," we feel that we must pause ere we award to him the second requisite ; yet, when we think upon his *Virginus*, a character which appears in so varied a light—a parent, a patriot, a philosopher, and a hero—and consider his faultless performance of so arduous a part, we feel that we are incompetent to give an opinion, and will, therefore pass to the third.

Sensibility, or the power to receive impressions, and the disposition to be quickly affected by them. This Macready possesses in an eminent degree, and which, in certain situations of tenderness, pathos, and regret, enables him to throw all rivalry at defiance. His faltering tones then appear to come from the inmost recesses of his soul ; and cold and unfeeling must that heart be which is not affected by them ; as in *Virginus*, when he betroths his daughter to *Tullius* ; in *Rob Roy*, when the bold outlaw feels and laments over his fallen state ; or in the interview with *Mrs. Haller*, when the husband's mind staggers between honour and affection.

POETRY.

A RANDOM RECORD,

Suggested by the City Pantheon Theatre having been let to Mr. De Ville.

By W. H. T.

WHERE Milton once lived—did he? Aye, there's the rub!
But 'tis said so, and who shall discredit,
A change has occur'd—for the street which was "Grub,"
Now evidence bears of his merit.

The cits and the nobs, the inhabitants too,
To memorials patient did listen,
And as they advanced, and more sapient grew,
Resolved their fam'd street to rechristen.

'Twas asserted—agreed—"the bard dwelled here;"
His fame their wise hopes were all built on,
And straight 'twas resolved, void from bickerings drear,
The street should be forthwith dubb'd "Milton."

Within this fam'd street a large edifice stands;
It moans for the founder's desertion;
For once 'neath its roof assembled the bands
Of the Godly—but hear its conversion.

The first change it felt was a stinging disgrace,
The worst it has seen, without measure,
Its sanctified pulpit became the fix'd place
For the rantings of old Madam Cheshire.

Then came a divine, who to marriage essayed
A Scotch lady deep,—let him catch her,—
An action was brought—why?—he wedding delay'd;
And mulct was this poor Alex. Fletcher.

Then follow'd Joe Fitch—his pardon I crave—
"The Reverend," "if you please Mrs. Grundy;"
But the title said Joe has thought proper to leave,
And declin'd holding forth on a Sunday.

A lecture on morals became the next theme,
In this *sacred* but changeable church;
But the lecture turn'd out a sad profitless scheme,
And Tom Brushfield was left in the lurch.

Then next in succession the *good place* was let—
No doubt let for purposes sinister—
To the *worthy divine*, whom, unless I forget,
M. P. Hunt called "his devilship's minister."

Now again comes a woman. A friend who was there
Said, to *gammon*, to rave, and to bawl, he
Throughout his whole life, ne'er heard one to compare
With this highly fam'd Mistress Macauley.

Here ended the preachings. Ah, sad to relate,
Miss Macauley—no audience would be at her
Lectures, the whole concern droop'd to such state,
'Twas resolv'd the church should be a theatre.

And now did the artists their office begin;
How alter'd its form and complexion!
The "smilers" look'd on, and vow'd 'twas a sin—
Each face was replete with dejection.

"Ah shocking! ah shocking!" an old woman cried,
 'Tis unholy—an infamous doing,
 It never will prosper, since thus you deride—
 O'er it mischief will ever be brewing.

"And more," she continued, "regard what I say :
 I predict this new temple of evil
 Will suddenly missing be found on some day—
 Will be gone in a lump to the devil."

Now up went the curtain, and down went the scene,
 The play was enacted—the farce on—
 The piece was *Rienzi*—the hero, I ween,
 Being play'd by the *ci-devant* parson.

Sometimes things went smoothly, and quiet, I vow,
 But before Bedford's box-bill was posted,
 A something occurred which engendered a row,
 And "the governor" forthwith was ousted.

Elected to rule next Tom Lem. Rede appeared—
 To be careless no actor dare venture :
 The spirit of evil his dominion cashier'd—
 Poor Tom was elected a *Bencher*.

Thus the terrible spell work'd its influence dire,
 O'erturning each effort—'tis true, man—
 The house was denounc'd to the spirit of fire,
 By the angry, old chattering woman.

Intrigues came on foot—with petitions assailed,
Rienzi each offer rejected,—
 The spirit was working, and *Mystery* prevailed,
 And thus was Charles Melville elected.

All seem'd to go smoothly—'twas pleasant to view
 The plays and the farces selected ;
 But the spirit wax'd angry—he long'd for his due—
 From his office was Melville ejected.

But enough have I said, for the rest is well known,
 Come to pass are the beldame's words evil,
 For though from the street it away hasn't flown,
 The theatre's gone to the *De Ville*.

ADDRESS SPOKEN BY MADAME VESTRIS.

AT THE OLYMPIC THEATRE.

Noble and gentle! Matrons!—Patrons!—Friends!
 Before you here a vent'rous woman bends!
 A warrior woman that in strife embarks,
 The first of all dramatic Joan of Arcs;
 Cheer on the enterprise thus dared by me!
 The first that ever led a company!

What though until this very hour and age,
 A Lessee Lady never own'd a stage—
 I'm that *Belle Sauvage*—only rather quieter—
 Like Mrs. Nelson, turn'd a stage proprietor!
 Welcome each early and each late arriver—
 This is my Omnibus, and I'm the driver!

Sure is my venture, for all honest folk,
 Who love a tune, or can enjoy a joke,
 Will know, whene'er they have an hour of leisure,
Wyck Street is best to come to for their pleasure.
 The laughter and the lamps with equal share
 Shall make this house a light-house against care.
 This is our home! 'Tis yours as well as mine:
 Here Joy may pay her homage at Mirth's shrine!
 Song, Whim, and Fancy, jocund rounds shall dance,
 And lure for you the light Vaudeville from France.
 Humour and Wit encourage my intent;
 And Music means to help to pay my rent.
 'Tis not mere promise—I appeal to facts;
 Henceforward judge me only by my acts!
 In this my purpose, stand I not alone—
 All women wish for houses of their own;
 And I was weary of perpetual dodging
 From house to house, in search of board and lodging!
 Faint were my heart—but with Pandora's scope
 I find in every box a lurking hope:
 My dancing spirits know of no decline—
 Here's the first *tier* you've ever seen of mine.
 Oh, my kind friends! befriend me still, as you
 Have in the bygone times been wont to do.
 Make me your Ward, against each ill designer,
 And prove Lord Chancellors to a female Minor.
 Cheer on my comrades, too, in their career;
 Some of your favourites are around me here;
 Give them—give me—the smiles of approbation:
 Still aid the petticoat on old kind principles,
 And make me yet a Captain of Invincibles.

THEATRICAL JOURNAL.

DRURY LANE.

Dec. 27.—*Jane Shore*.—Davy Jones; or, *Harlequin and Mother Carey's Chickens*.*

* *Dram. Per.*—Davy Jones, Mr. Honnor. Mother Carey, the Witch, Mr. Eaton, Dilly Ducker and Jenny Diver, her Elder Chickens, Master Carr and Master Hildrew. The Young Brood, Masters Fenton, Baker, Lane, Stone, and Hogg. John Dory, Mr. Southby. Major Sturgeon, Mr. E. J. Parsloe. Old Mullet, Mr. Waters. Mr. Dolphin. Mr. Seabright. Finny Fanny, the Mermaid, Mr. Richardson. Capt. Crosstree, R.N., Mr. T. Blanchard. Joe, Mr. Baker. Captain Stiffback, R.N., Mr. Bartlett. Pipes, Mr. Hartland. Black Eyed Susan, Mr. Weiland. Sweet William, Mr. Howell. Alruccabah, the Polar Star, Miss Poole. Harlequin, Mr. Howell. Columbines, Misses Barnett and Basseke. The Clowns, Messrs. Southey and E. J. Parsloe. Little Harlequin, Mater Marshall. Little Columbine, Miss Marshall. Pantaloon, Mr. T. Blanchard. Pet Child, Mr. Wieland.

New Scenery.—Scene 1. The North Foreland, with Light-house—Andrews. 2. Mother Carey's Refectory, and Coral Cave in the Deep-deep Sea—Andrews. 3. Quarter-deck of the *Spanker*, 36—Adams. 4. Susan's Cottage by Moonlight—Andrews. 5. The Bilboes—Marinari. 6. The Sun's Watery Bed—Marinari. 7. Farm House, Sunrise—Andrews. 8. Ruins of the Argyle Rooms the Night after

- Dec. 28.—The School for Scandal.—Davy Jones.
 29.—Werner.—Davy Jones.
 Jan. 1.—Henri Quatre.*—Davy Jones.
 3.—Pizarro.—Davy Jones.
 4.—The School for Scandal.—Davy Jones.
 5.—Werner.—Davy Jones.
 6.—The Brigand.—The Illustrious Stranger.—Davy Jones.
 7.—Werner.—Davy Jones.
 8.—Henri Quatre.—Davy Jones.
 10.—Pizarro.†—Davy Jones.
 11.—The School for Scandal.—Davy Jones.
 12.—Werner.—Davy Jones.
 13.—The Brigand.—The Illustrious Stranger.—Davy Jones.
 14.—Werner.—Perfection.—Davy Jones.
 15.—Rob Roy Macgregor.‡—Davy Jones.
 17.—Pizarro.—A King's Fireside.—Davy Jones.
 18.—The School for Scandal.—Davy Jones.
 19.—Werner.—Turning the Tables.—Davy Jones.
 20.—The Brigand.—The Illustrious Stranger.—Davy Jones.
 21.—Werner.—Perfection.—Davy Jones.
 22.—Rob Roy Macgregor.—Davy Jones.
 24.—William Tell.§—Davy Jones.
 25.—The Jealous Wife.||—Deaf as a Post.—Davy Jones.
 26.—Werner.—Turning the Tables.—Davy Jones.

the Fire—Andrews 9. Bellevue Cottage, and Surrounding Neighbourhood—Franklin.
 10. The Brighton Archway, erected in Honour of their Majesties' Visit to Brighton, August 30th, 1830 With a New Allegorical Ballet. 11. Commercial Dock Canal.
 12. Nursery for Pet Children. 13. Outside of Upholsterer's. 14. The Diorama.
 15. Grand Hydraulic Temple, illustrative of the Union of the Waters—Marinari.
 Mr. Stanfield's New Diorama, from sketches taken on the spot during his last continental tour.

This is by far the most witless and heavy pantomime that has been brought out here for some time; the introduction is a burlesque upon *Black Eyed Susan*, (which Mr. Barrymore is accused, by Mr. Farrel, of having stolen from the pantomime produced at the Pavilion Theatre last year,) and, with the exception of the Mermaid with her large comb, contains nothing ludicrous. As for the tricks and changes, they are not only limited, but stale. The two Clowns are very much in each other's way, and both are alike destitute of humour. The Harlequin is as stiff and uneasy as if he was moved by wires; and the Pantaloon capers about as if he had St. Vitus's Dance. Miss Barnett, as the second Columbine, greatly relieves the scene by her animated gestures and sprightly dancing. Stanfield's Diorama is most beautiful: it is to be seen, not to be described, and saved Davy Jones from damnation (by the bye, though this sailors' demon gives the name to the pantomime, he has no more to do with the plot than the writer of this article). It is stated that the managers, anticipating a failure, invited Stanfield over from Paris to paint the Diorama for 300*l.*, which was executed in the short space of ten days.

* Henri Quatre, Mr. Macready. Louisa, Mrs. Waylett. Florence St. Leon, Miss Pearson

† Rolla, Mr. Wallack. Cora, Miss Philips.

‡ Mr. Macready resumed his old character this evening, but he displayed little of that energy and heroic bearing which was formerly so much admired. *That thing*, Miss Pearson, was the Diana Vernon. Depend upon it, the public will not long be insulted with impunity.

§ The most crowded house of the season. At the conclusion Mr. Macready was loudly called for

|| What could induce Mr. Macready to play Mr. Oakley?

COVENT GARDEN.

- Dec. 27.—The Grecian Daughter.—Harlequin Pat.*
 28.—Clari.—Hide and Seek.—Harlequin Pat.
 29.—The Carnival at Naples.—Harlequin Pat.
 Jan. 1.—The Carnival at Naples.—Harlequin Pat.
 3.—Romeo and Juliet.—Harlequin Fat.†
 4.—The Chancery Suit.—Harlequin Fat.
 5.—Cinderella.—Harlequin Fat.
 6.—The Fair Penitent.—Harlequin Fat.
 7.—The Hundred Pound Note.‡—Harlequin Fat.

* *Dram Per.*—Rhadamisthus O'Mullingar, afterwards Harlequin Pat, Mr. Power. Brian Borhoime, King of Munster, Mr. Baker. O'Roirk, King of Ulster, afterwards Pantaloon, Mr. Barnes. M'Drone, (his Piper,) Mr. F. Sutton. Harlequin Bat, Mr. Ellar. Clown, Mr. Paulo. St. Patrick, a Gentleman much esteemed in Ireland, Mr. Fuller. Phelim, Mr. Turnour. M'Polyphe, the Giant of the Causeway, Mr. Long-in-the-stride. Echo of the Giant's Causeway, Mr. Double-tongue. Mealy Moth, Principal of the Firm of Fairies, Miss P. Haughton. Humming-Bee, Miss Harrington. Norna, Brian's Bride, abducted by O'Roirk, Mrs. Vedy. Genius of Pantomime, Miss Fortescue. Kathleen, Rhadamisthus's Bride, and Columbine, Miss L. Johnston. The Dances by Miss Griffiths, Miss Ryals, Miss Thomasin. An Exquisite, just landed, Mr. Gurent. Landlord, Mr. Collett. Fat Welchman, Mr. Griffiths. Little Harlequin, Miss Hunt.

New Scenery.—Scene 1. The Giant's Causeway by Moonlight—Grieve. 2. The Boyne Water—T. Grieve. 3. Exterior of King O'Roirk's Castle, Stone Sentinels on guard. 4. The Grand Banqueting Hall, King O'Roirk's whole court transformed to Statues—W. Grieve. 5. The Banshee's Ravine. 6. M'Murrough's Keep. 7. Extensive view of the Lakes of Killarney, as seen from an eminence—Roberts. 8. The Custom-house and Quay, Dublin—T. Grieve. 9. The new Bridge over the Menai—Grieve. 10. The Pool, Tower, and West India Dock—Grieve. 11. A Market, Florist's, Green Grocer's, Poulterer's and China Shops—Finley. 12. The Globe Hotel and Cutler's Shop—Finley. 13. Frog Farm and Kitchen—W. Grieve. 14. Windsor Park and Castle—T. Grieve. 15. Portsmouth Harbour, the Royal Yatch passing along the Coast, till she arrives off Brighton, with a view of the East Cliff, Chain Pier, &c. and the General Illumination—T. Grieve. The Triumphal Arch, erected in honour of the arrival of their most Gracious Majesties at the Royal Pavilion, on the 30th of August, 1830. 16. Ludgate Hill and St. Paul's, as it was *intended to be*, on the 9th of November, 1830. Lost in a Fog—Grieve. 17. Guildhall, as fitted up for the Lord Mayor's Festival—Grieve. 18. The Fairy Grove and Magic Palace—Messrs. Grieve.

It is the custom, now-a-days, for any person who is blessed or cursed with the company of a party of country relatives, bent on visiting the theatre, not to ask which is the amusing pantomime, but which is the least tedious; and we think Covent-garden may claim that distinction. We must, however, except the speaking opening by Mr. Peake, which is wretched nonsense. There always ought to be some sort of plot in the introduction, and as it requires no extraordinary stretch of intellect, we cannot see why it is omitted. Mr. Peake is so ashamed of his work, that the usual programme and songs are not published; we therefore find it almost impossible to explain the story. Power is an Irish attendant of King Brian, who kills a certain one-eyed giant, the enemy of a troop of fairies, who, in gratitude, turn him into Harlequin, but he commits so many blunders, that his friends are obliged to dismiss him, and call up Harlequin Bat to take his place. Power's new honour sat very uncomfortably upon him. The new Columbine is not entitled to praise, but the Pantaloon is admirable. There were a few tolerable allusions to the follies of the day: Pantaloon, after being run through with a red-hot poker and rubbed with cabbage-leaves, declares he has not felt so well for a long time. The Lord Mayor's show being lost in a fog, told well. The Giant's Causeway and the lakes of Killarney are fine specimens of scenic painting.

† Mr. Power being disgusted with his character, gave it up, and the pantomime was therefore changed from *Pat* to *Fat*. Harlequin Fat, Mr. Keeley.

‡ Miss Arlington, Miss Taylor, who played this trifling part with the most appropriate sprightliness. She was encored in her two songs, "My Father's Land," and "Buy a Broom."

- Jan. 8.—Cinderella.—Harlequin Fat.
 10.—Romeo and Juliet.—Harlequin Fat.
 11.—Cinderella.—Harlequin Fat.
 12.—Fazio.*—Harlequin Fat.
 13.—The Hundred Pound Note.—Harlequin Fat.
 14.—Fazio.—Harlequin Fat.
 15.—Cinderella.—Harlequin Fat.
 17.—Fazio.—Harlequin Fat.
 18.—Cinderella.—Harlequin Fat.
 19.—Fazio.—Harlequin Fat.
 20.—The Chancery Suit.—Hide and Seek.—Harlequin Fat,
 21.—Fazio.—Teddy the Tiler.—Harlequin Fat.
 22.—Cinderella.—Harlequin Fat.
 24.—Fazio.—The Irishman in London.—Harlequin Fat.
 25.—Cinderella.—Harlequin Fat.
 26.—Fazio.—The Youthful Queen.—Harlequin Fat.

MINOR THEATRES.

COBURG.—*Harlequin and the Old Woman in the Bottle, or the Pig and the Silver Penny*, of course founded on the nursery tale of that name. We think this is one of the least objectionable pantomimes of the season. We have abundance of new scenery, and a very interesting diorama—the subject, the late events at Belgium. The Old Woman (Mr. Sloman) is afterwards turned into Clown, and the Pig into Harlequin. The latter change somewhat surprised us, as we thought Columbine's lover was always destined to wear the coat of many colours. Young Grimaldi (who has lately recovered from a dangerous illness) is by far the best Clown of the day; yet he did not seem to caper about with his wonted alacrity. The Columbine is graceful and pretty; the Pantaloon did his best. The night we attended, *Richard the Second* commenced the evening's entertainments. We were much struck by the admirable manner in which Mr. Gomersal dressed and looked the character of Wat Tyler. It really was a subject for a painter. Mr. Serle was impressive as Richard; but we repeat, it is a disgrace to the patent managers, that such an actor is allowed to remain here. Miss Watson displayed great mind and feeling in the scene where she is informed of her father's murder. If this actress had appeared at Covent Garden twelve years ago, she would now have been—No matter.

The manager has abandoned the shilling orders, and issued out half-crown ones for the boxes, and eighteen-penny ones for the pit. But, judging from the state of the house, he must return to his old plan.

SURREY.—No novelty worthy of notice has been produced here during the past month. The theatre has been re-decorated (not before it was wanted.) The pantomime, *Harlequin Jack of Newbury*, was by no means creditable to the spirit or

* This is a most beautiful poem, but a very indifferent tragedy; more harmonious and poetical language we could not wish to hear, but that is nearly all we can say in its favour. Miss Kemble has not sufficient sensibility for the heroine; she does not look the being of passion and impulse that Bianca is when the servant informs her that his master was with the Lady Arabella. Miss Kemble was obliged to resort to constrained gestures and noise to express her mingled emotions. In some instances she was fully deserving of praise, but that was in the mechanical part of the character (if we may use the term), as for instance, when she first meets her husband's eye after having betrayed him. Mr. Warde's conception of Fazio might be good; the execution was very heavy; he neither looked, spoke, nor moved the character. Mrs. Chatterley's Arabella has been much condemned, for what cause we know not, for in her first encounter with Fazio her manner was extremely winning and appropriate.

Blanchard's Bartolo is an exquisite morsel.

Miss Kemble has terribly fallen off in her attractions: last season, on the first night of a new character, the pit was filled with the first rush; this evening, we could choose our seat at seven. This is not to be wondered at—not to be regretted; for had Miss Kemble been only moderately supported, the case would have been otherwise.

liberality of the managers. Mrs. Egerton, Mr. Rayner, Mr. Sloman, and several other valuable actors have left.

ADELPHI.—Jan. 24.—*The King of the Alps, or the Misanthrope*. John Rappenskoff, from the heavy losses he had experienced in trade, and from the ungrateful conduct of various friends, has become violent and morose in his temper, and distrustful of all around him: nay, so morbid is his imagination, that he suspects (on the most absurd grounds) that his wife is plotting his murder. Under this impression, he abruptly leaves his home, and retires to the mountains, where he purchases a hut of a charcoal-burner. Astragalus, the King of the Alps, a benevolent genius, appears to the misanthropist's distressed family, and promises to restore him to them. He has an interview with Rappenskoff in his hut, and finding that his arguments and remonstrances are utterly useless, proposes that he should assume his form, while the other (Rappenskoff) is to appear in the likeness of his brother-in-law. In these assumed forms, they visit Rappenskoff's family; and the king of the Alps, by enacting all the misanthropist's fantastic tricks, so exposes the folly of his conduct, that Rappenskoff is completely cured. Mathews provoked abundance of laughter throughout—especially in his anxiety to witness how his double would look. Yates's imitation of him is one of the most clever thing ever seen on the stage.

The groundwork of the piece (which is translated from the German) is much better imagined than executed; for the dialogue is by no means equal to the interest and novelty of the situations. In the under-plot, Reeve played a drunken charcoal-burner, in his usual droll style; and Smith, his dumb relative, displayed some fine melo-dramatic acting. The piece is well got up. Some very beautiful Alpine scenery is introduced.

The pantomime here is called *Grimalkin, the King of the Cats*. The Harlequin, Mr. Gibson, possesses an extraordinary flexibility of limb.

OLYMPIC.—Madame Vestris opened this Theatre with *Mary Queen of Scots*. Mary, Miss Foote. *Olympic Revels*, (a humorous burlesque, by Planché and Dance)—Pandora, Madame Vestris. *Little Jockey*—Annette, Miss Foote. *Clarissa Harlowe*—Clarissa, Mrs. Glover. The company, with the exception of the stars, is the very worst ever collected in a metropolitan theatre. Madame Vestris has cleared upwards of 100*l.* each night of performing.

SADLER'S WELLS.—Dibdin's celebrated pantomime of *Mother Goose*, which he states was written and got up in less than a month, has been revived here with great success.

THE PATENT THEATRES.—The question now before the Lord Chancellor is, of course, too important as a theatrical incident not to be recorded here; but having made a mistake in the arrangement of the early pages, we have resolved to wait till next month, when we intend giving an abridgment of the entire trial.

PROVINCIAL INTELLIGENCE, &c.

NEWCASTLE.—Renewing my series of criticisms with the commencement of your third volume, I now proceed to lay before your notice an account of the proceedings of the new company established at this theatre, under the management of Mr. Penley, of the Windsor and Richmond circuit. "It is an ill wind," says the old proverb, somewhat musty, but I may be allowed, nevertheless, to say that the round of ill-got-up performances, and worse attendances of last season, which brought the affairs of that period to a crisis, and blew poor Nicholson and his ill-starred company away from Newcastle, must have been a bad wind indeed, could it not have brought about at least an ameliorated order of things. This theatre, with

various re-embellishments, and sundry very necessary cleansings, and after the usual preliminary placardments of "*entirely new company, under entirely new management*," opened for the winter season on the evening of Wednesday, Dec. 15th, 1830, with Sheridan's *School for Scandal*, and (first time here) *Teddy the Tiler*. The national anthem, and Mr. Penley's prefatory address, preceded the comedy, which blazed in the bills with new engagements. We had the manager himself, a first appearance here, in Charles Surface, and re-appearances of two deserved favourites of a former season—Miss Cleaver and Miss Penley, in Lady Teazle and Mrs. Candour. The representatives of Sir Peter Teazle, Sir Oliver Surface, Joseph Surface, and the

whole numerous list of *dramatis persone* were all strangers to these boards.

From the opening till the date of my present epistle, somewhat more than a month has elapsed, and such has been the variety presented, that I can but barely endeavour to effect a glance at every thing, without presuming upon much finished criticism, or beauty of arrangement. First of the actors, Mr. Terman comes before us as the professed leader, and combines many of the requisites, mental and bodily, of his predecessors, Mr. Waldron and Mr. Stuart. In stage appearance and figure also, to compare him with all the others of Mr. Nicholson's great people, I would say, that he is neither so long nor so lanky as Sam Butler, nor so big and bulky as George Gray, and to a certainty he possesses no single point of resemblance with that very dear friend of mine, Harry Kemble. Mr. Terman appeared forth in Joseph Surface, then walked quietly for a few successive nights through Henry (*Speed the Plough*), Steadfast (*Heir at Law*)—broke out with great force and vigour in Shylock, and has since assumed with a firm hand and a promising grasp, the very highest range of the drama—Othello, Beverley, Hotspur, Arden of Feversham, Macbeth, and Hamlet. The manager appropriates to his own use the head light comedy, varying it a little with his second tragedy, &c. He may not have pleased their high mightinesses the metropolitan critics, by his assumptions, in London, but he seems perfectly to satisfy a Newcastle public, as well in Young Rapid, Sadboy, Bob Handy, *et id omne genus*, as in Macduff, Gratiano, Prince Hal, and Jack Adams; appertaining, however, unto this point, I am bound to say, that great fault has hitherto to be laid to Mr. Penley's charge for a too pressing repetition of such plays as have been witnessed every season, almost to loathing, for the very obvious purpose of his own personal exhibition in his favourite parts, for audiences of the present day want a change in theatrical as well as many other matters. Mr. Johnson, announced from Manchester, is the best old man, in the first rate old men, that I have seen here for years. He had, however, great difficulties to contend with in Sir John Falstaff; and without intending to detract from the very respectable claims exhibited in that performance, when placed in the balance with his Sir Peter Teazle and Sir Abel Handy, his fat knight was most assuredly "found wanting." Miss Penley secures the heavy tragedy—Lady Macbeth, Helen Macgregor, Meg Merrilies,

&c., and has highly pleased every body in Mrs. Beverley, Annette (*Maid and Magpie*), Amelia (*Woodman's Hut*), Lady Amaranth, Dinah Primrose, and Augusta Polinsky, in *A Husband at Sight*. Miss Cleaver fluctuates between high-comedy Lady Teazles, and attendants, such as Pink and Nerissa, quite off to Cicely Homespun and Jessy Oatland. Mr. Hay, from Liverpool, is a low-comedian, but he has had too much of what is technically called "business" put into his hands, and is withal sadly given to the grievous sin of overacting. The best things I have seen him do were Mr. Tomkins (*23, John-street, Adelphi*), and Launcelot Gobbo; and the very worst Sir Benjamin Backbite and Teddy the Tiler. Mr. Hay's other Irishmen and general York-shiremen sail in a middle sphere, but rarely rise above mediocrity. The same remark applied to Mr. Hay, belongs also to Mr. Hazleton and Mr. Barratt, two other members of this respectable company; for I must maintain that it is as far beyond all bounds of versatility for the former equally to sustain Stukely and Crabtree, Iago and Teague, or the latter Dr. Pangloss, I.L.D. and A.S.S. and Duncan King of Scotland, as it is inconsistent to double up Mr. Barratt again as the murdered majesty, and his successor's lady's physician. Mrs. Cleaver is the old woman of the company; and a Miss Field, from Liverpool (wanting, however, some additional support both in male and female singers), has given great promise of excellence in several musical dramas, and has been generally encored in all her songs. The novelties, for the short period that the theatre has been open, have been very numerous, and each has been, more or less, frequently repeated. *Teddy the Tiler*, 23, John-street, *Adelphi*, *Mutiny at the Nore*, *Arden of Feversham*, *Free and Easy*, *A Husband at Sight*, and *The Robber's Wife*, have been the principal. Two fashionable bespeaks have, in successive weeks, filled the house to the roof; and the attraction of the recent holidays, combined with what I trust is an indication of a reviving theatrical spirit, stimulated by their general public and private good character, will, I believe, eventually make things go off well; and what is better than all, Mr. Penley intends to limit his season to four winter months, with a week or two in summer for the assizes and races, instead of wearing out every body's patience by playing the twelve months round, as obtained under the old system.

A. D.

Newcastle, Jan. 1831.